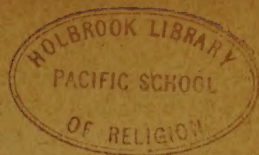


The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM



NO. 118

JANUARY 28TH, 1942

DEAR MEMBER,

In the discussions in the News-Letter about Britain and the future of Europe, there has not been space thus far to emphasise sufficiently an issue of major importance. It is posed squarely in the *National News-Letter*¹ of January 15th.

STALIN'S NEW ORDER

The writer gives it as his belief that in Mr. Eden's recent visit to Russia Mr. Stalin told him that he was convinced that the Russian army could beat the German army, and that in that case the Russians would take very good care to prevent the German militarists from again making trouble in Europe. This would be effected by the supervision of the eastern half of Germany by Russia, while the south and west would be looked after by France, where there would be a Communist government. (You will observe that a very different rôle is here cast for France from that envisaged in our last week's News-Letter.) The writer adds that he does not believe that Stalin debated or argued; he spoke.

This is put forward as a clever guess. I have no means of knowing whether it is a good guess. But it is clearly possible that the shape of future events may resemble this picture much more closely than many of us have been inclined up to the present to think.

There are thus on the table three sets of proposals for the future of Europe. There is Hitler's New Order. There is Stalin's New Order. And there is the New Order of the western democracies. It is easier to form some sort of picture of the first two than of the last, which the *National News-Letter* describes as "lost somewhere in the vagueness of the Atlantic Charter." What is it that the democracies stand for?

THE NEW ORDER OF THE DEMOCRACIES

One essential element in the answer, and perhaps the most important, is the subject of an article by Mr. Middleton Murry in the *Fortnightly Review* for January. In so far as this country is consciously fighting for anything, it is fighting for a *tolerant* society. "The survival of toleration is the crucial issue in this transitional and chaotic modern world." This is our moral case against Hitlerism; and it is equally our moral case against Stalinism. But whether it is in fact possible to maintain a tolerant society in face of the forces of the modern world is a very serious question, and the trouble is that only a tiny minority is as yet aware either of the necessity or of the immeasurable difficulty of the task.

If we assume the defeat of Hitlerism, there will be no more momentous question in the social and political sphere than the relation between the other two conceptions of the future order. Mr. Murry provides an important clue to an understanding of the nature of the problem. The energy of totalitarian societies is derived in large part from the recognition that a machine-society is different in kind from all previous societies. The exhilaration, which comes from the release of the full energies of the machine and the sweeping away of all impediments to maximum production, brings to the individual an

¹ Founded by Stephen King-Hall, Hartfield House, Headley, Borden, Hants.

experience akin to that of religion—the experience of being united with something greater than himself. The union in this case is not with a transcendent God but with the new, pulsing life of the social organism. The important point is that this new materialistic religion is real in the actual experience of those who share in it.

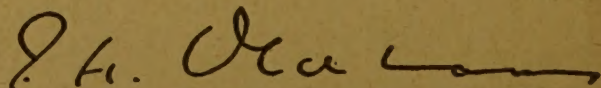
It is in this context that we begin to understand the significance of Communist atheism. A great deal of the more superficial denunciation of atheism leaves me unmoved. Atheism in the modern world needs a lot of understanding. A man may call himself an atheist when he is rejecting an idea of God in which it is much better that he should not believe. Yet it remains true that Communism is the explicit refusal of God as the final end of man's life. It is based on the deliberate belief that man in his sovereign independence is able in his collective capacity to take complete control of nature and of his own destiny.

It is, or ought to be, clear, however, that this is in substance the same belief as the self-sufficient humanism of western societies. In its practice, if not in its professed beliefs, the western world as a whole has been largely atheistic. It is a good thing that Communism should have torn away all disguises and brought us face to face with the ultimate issue of human life.

This fundamental question underlies all discussions of a new order and cuts across every solution in the social sphere. The maintenance of a tolerant society depends on it, since it is only in virtue of his relation to God that the individual has a standing over against the community. But we could hardly make a greater mistake than to confuse, as many Christian people do, the crucial issue of atheism and Christian faith with the difference between a supposedly Christian Britain and a godless Russia. Those who place their fundamental reliance on the power of man himself with the aid of science to shape his own future are in principle atheistic, and this tendency of thought is preponderant in the western democracies as well as in Russia. Among the Russian people, on the other hand, there are, side by side with the philosophy at present dominant, not only religious impulses that cannot be repressed but also, in wide circles, images formed by centuries of Christian teaching which may spring unexpectedly to life. It is then a vital matter that the Russian and Anglo-Saxon peoples should come to know, understand and mutually enrich one another not only at the level of social planning but also at the deeper spiritual level of religious experience.

The writer of this week's Supplement has taken a prominent part in the Student Christian Movement, national and international, and has been engaged for twelve years in the development of Christian literature for Africa. She has travelled widely in Africa, and has had close contact with many of the problems of that continent.

Yours sincerely,



Subscriptions—The rate of subscription to the News-Letter is 12s. 6d. (\$3.0 in U.S.A. and Canada) for one year, and 6s. 6d. (\$1.50 in U.S.A. and Canada) for six months. Back numbers—4d. each, 1s. 2d. for 6, 1s. 11d. for 12 copies. Post free.

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THE CHRISTIAN NEWS - LETTER

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Supplement to

C.N.-L. No. 118

BRITISH POLICY IN AFRICA

By Margaret Wrong

The Atlantic Charter laid down "certain common principles in the national policies" of the countries adhering to it "on which they based their hopes for a better future of the world." Among these principles were the repudiation of territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned; respect for the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and the establishment of a peace "which will afford assurance that all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want."

In the pact against the Axis twenty-six nations at the beginning of this year reaffirmed their adherence to the principles of the Atlantic Charter and declared that complete victory over their enemies is essential "to defend life, liberty, independence and religious freedom, and to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands."

THE ATLANTIC CHARTER AND COLONIAL POLICY

The purpose of this Supplement is to show that the achievement of these purposes requires not only a victory over external enemies, but the solution of problems within the British Empire itself. It is concerned more particularly with the application of the principles to British colonial policy in Africa. With regard to the application of the principles within the British Empire, the Prime Minister has stated:

"We have made declarations on these matters which are complete in themselves, free from ambiguity and related to the conditions and circumstances of the territories and peoples affected. They will be found to be entirely in harmony with the high conception of freedom and justice which inspired the joint declaration."

At a recent meeting of the Royal Empire Society, Lord Moyne, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, made a significant declaration. In reply to a question whether we ought to divide the lines of development of colonial peoples from those of the white races, he said that "it was the policy of parallel development that the native race should not compete with the white race in the civilisation brought within their reach. It seemed to him, that that policy was quite inconsistent with all that we were fighting for in this war. Surely if we were fighting for liberty we should avoid any reproach when we blame Hitler for his policy of *Herrenvolk* that we were denying full equality to all those within the Empire. Education was needed in this matter not only in the Colonies but in this country, and it would be a reproach if, while we talked of equality and liberty, we did not give the widest opportunity to these backward races of the advances within their power with the fullest diversity of interpretation."¹

To these pronouncements may be added sentence of President Roosevelt's with reference to the racial problem for which in the United States, as in the British Empire, the solution has not yet been found. In his message to Congress on January 6th of this year he said, "we must be particularly vigilant against racial discrimination in any of its ugly forms."

It is not surprising that these pronouncements should be scanned with special concern by members of the African race, in view of the disabilities to which that race is subjected, and that they should find difficulty in reconciling them with the conditions which actually exist. Their views find expression, for example, in the monthly News-Letter issued by the League of Coloured Peoples.² It is justly claimed in the current issue that "it is dangerous to think of the development

¹ "A New Philosophy of Colonial Rule." *United Empire*. November-December, 1941.

² 164 Queens Road, Peckham, London, S.W.15. Subscription to News-Letter 6s. Single copy 6d.

of Asia and Africa in different terms than those in which we think of the development of Europe and America."

AREAS OF WHITE SETTLEMENT

There are, as is well-known, two policies in regard to the African inhabitants in the parts of Africa associated with the British Commonwealth of Nations. The one prevails in areas in which the white race has permanently established itself, as in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia; the other in areas, like West Africa, which are free from the complications of a resident white community.

In South Africa and Southern Rhodesia the policy is one of political, economic and social segregation of the races, directed to the maintenance of political, economic and social supremacy by the European minority over the African majority. Pressure for self-government by European settlers in territories administered by the Colonial Office is prompted by the desire for similar conditions. Thus the agitation at the present time for the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland comes from Europeans in Northern and Southern Rhodesia who form one per cent and five per cent of the respective populations. The white Labour Party of Northern Rhodesia, which is pressing for amalgamation, visualises the spread of the Southern Rhodesia policy of segregation to the two Crown Colonies of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Amalgamation on the terms proposed would mean that 60,000 Europeans would govern 2,500,000 Africans.

All over Africa Europeans are dependent in the economic sphere on African labour. The policy of segregation of the races—or parallel development as it has come to be called—is not intended to do away with this dependence. In South Africa, for instance, where the African majority has rights in only 13 per cent. of the land of the Union, it has been publicly argued that a more liberal land policy would endanger the flow of African labour to European farms, towns and mines. In Southern Rhodesia, the government is constantly asked to bring pressure to bear on Africans to leave the reserves where they cultivate their own lands in order to work for Europeans. Into both territories there is a steady flow of African labour from other parts of the continent. Racial segregation is intended to prevent

economic competition between Africans and Europeans by reserving the higher paid, skilled work for Europeans and restricting Africans to the lower paid, unskilled occupations. This economic colour bar is legally enforced in South Africa and in Southern Rhodesia, and is increasingly enforced in practice in Northern Rhodesia. To cite two examples—on the railway in Northern Rhodesia, Africans are precluded, as they are further south, from driving trains and other skilled work. On the copper mines they cannot rise higher than "boss boys." The Northern Rhodesia Labour Party, which has been recently formed and which admits no Africans to membership, has as a plank in its platform that Northern Rhodesia must be recognised as a country of European settlement and be controlled by Europeans in a similar manner to Southern Rhodesia.

THE CROWN COLONIES

In the African colonies administered by the Colonial Office where the complicating factor of white settlement is absent, the policy of the Administration has been directed to the prevention of exploitation and of administrative abuses and to the preparation of the people for gradual advance in the direction of self-government.

The development of this policy has been hampered by the backwardness of economic development and the consequent lack of resources for social welfare. Low wage rates and lack of revenue for public works, amenities and public services, including education, have tended to keep the standard of life low, and to leave the great masses of the inhabitants in a state of ignorance and inefficiency.

For a number of years before the war, a series of enquiries on the political, economic and social conditions in the British colonies were undertaken by the British government. The general picture given in the *African Survey* under the direction of Lord Hailey, the report of which was published in 1938, revealed on the one hand, notable achievements in a number of spheres, more particularly in those of public order and the administration of justice and in the fostering of local government in accordance with African traditions. On the other hand it revealed appalling conditions of widespread poverty, ignorance, lack of economic and social development and wastage of natural resources.

These enquiries had, before the outbreak

of the war, focussed attention on economic and social conditions, and had led to the conclusion that the principle that "a colony should have only those services which it could afford to maintain out of its own resources" must be revised. In spite of the outbreak of the war, the British government issued in 1940 a statement on Colonial Development and Welfare, in which it was declared that "the primary aim of colonial policy is to protect and advance the interests of the inhabitants of the colonies," and that assistance to this end would be given by the British government. A grant of £5,000,000 a year for ten years was approved as a beginning, and colonial governments are now submitting plans for long-term development and requests for assistance from this fund. Certain new machinery has been set up in the Colonial Office including a Social Services Department and a Welfare officer with three assistants of African descent to safeguard the interests of peoples from the colonies residing in Great Britain. The Labour Adviser to the Colonial Office has submitted reports on British Colonies in Africa, and advocated the appointment in them of labour officers with trade union experience. This is being done in several territories. A despatch to the colonial governments from the Secretary of State issued in June of last year, attached special importance to the training of Africans for staffing the social services, including the key service of education.

Lord Hailey, in a recent speech, has drawn the conclusion from these recent developments that, as in Europe, so also in Africa, the state must in a larger degree accept responsibility for the extension of the social services, the security of employment and the raising of the general standard of living. This means that the state must play a more active part in economic development, the building up of industries in African colonies and the larger provision of social services which will enable the people to develop their capacities in preparation for self-governing institutions.

THE TWO POLICIES IN CONFLICT

We are thus faced in British Africa with two conflicting principles and policies. The question becomes acute in regard to those territories at present under the administration of the Colonial Office where a smaller or larger body of white settlers desire to pass

over to the other system. The proposals for the amalgamation of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia is a test case. Africans from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, in giving evidence before the Bledisloe Commission, expressed their anxiety about amalgamation, and it was recognised in the report of that Commission that this was "a factor which could not be ignored." In a debate in the House of Commons on colonial affairs, it was stated by one speaker that "the most important issue of political freedom which is raised at the present time is that of the proposed amalgamation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and of Nyasaland."¹

The spread of the policy of race segregation and of enforcement of a colour bar to all parts of British Africa where there is white settlement is actively fostered from South Africa, and the distinguished part that South Africa is playing in the war strengthens the bargaining power of the Union in regard to post-war arrangements. On the other hand, behind the remarkable support of the war effort by African peoples in all parts of British Africa, and the gallantry of African troops, is the conviction that Africans will ultimately achieve the goal of full and responsible membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations. African and European troops' knowledge of conditions in different parts of the continent is increased by war service. West African troops in Kenya have commented adversely on racial relations there. "It is not a good country for black men," wrote one. There is also evidence that propinquity has fostered mutual respect between black and white soldiers, including men in white South African units, who have come to know members of the other race not merely as symbols, but as men sharing common dangers and achievements. But the clash of principles remains.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHRISTIANS

What is the position of Christian people on this issue, an issue as great and far-reaching as that faced at the time of the struggle to put down slavery in Africa? At that time members of many Christian communions took a leading part in a crusade to end a traffic in which human beings were used as chattels. The result was that government

¹ House of Commons Parliamentary Debates, November 20th, 1941, p. 522.

was able to count on widespread support from Christian people on specific measures for the abolition of slavery, and also had to take cognisance of the opinion of Christian people throughout the country if these principles were compromised. Can government rely on the support of Christian opinion to-day for measures to implement the principles of racial equality in the political, economic and social life of British African colonies which have now been publicly announced? Lord Hailey has stated that a sense of moral obligation is essential for the carrying out of this policy. Have Christians that sense of moral obligation and are they prepared to foster it in others?

If the answer is in the affirmative, specific action is required. Four lines of activity may be suggested.

First, cells of Christian people who understand the principles at stake and are ready to propagate them are needed. Study of colonial questions, preparation of articles putting forward the issues in magazines and in the press, discussion groups, addresses and sermons clarifying principle are required—the aim being to widen horizons to include the needs and possibilities of peoples of other races.

Secondly, Christian opinion must make itself felt both in support and in criticism of government policy. The Colonial Office is responsible to Parliament; members of Parliament are responsible to their constituents. At the present time there are in Parliament a small group of members who follow colonial affairs closely, but the attendance at debates on colonial questions is thin. This would seem to indicate that members of parliament do not think that their constituents are interested in colonial affairs. One or two congregations have recently approached their respective members on a specific colonial question. This is one possible line of action.

Thirdly, a more sensitive Christian conscience is needed regarding the well-being of Africans in this country. The darker a man

is in colour the greater is the difficulty he meets in finding suitable living accommodation and in establishing good social contacts with Europeans. Slums in seaport towns where coloured seamen congregate reflect little credit on western civilisation. The East and West Friendship Council, a body created by the churches to welcome and help coloured students in this country, can only afford a half-time secretary to do a more than full-time job. Clubs welcoming people of different races need support. Experience of colour prejudice here has embittered many Africans, and some who came to this country as practising Christians have returned to Africa prejudiced against Christianity because they have not found Christian fellowship here. The need is great for positive action by individuals and congregations in welcoming African people.

Fourthly, European and African Christians must work together to translate principles which have been announced into practice. Livingstone's revelation and his appeal regarding slavery led to an expansion of missionary enterprise so notable that many Africans have identified western civilisation and Christianity. "It is not so long ago," writes a young African,¹ "that we in Africa spoke of Europe as 'the Christian countries of the west' . . . We had good reason: in our minds and hearts were enshrined the memories of many missionaries who laid down their lives for Africa. They brought us the redemptive message of Jesus Christ; and also by teaching us to read and write made us co-heirs with them of the wisdom and knowledge of the ages. . . . They have been messengers of God. There have been administrators, too, like Sir Gordon Guggisberg, the late Governor of the Gold Coast, who had a high sense of vocation, and with faith and vision served the country. . . . It is these men that gave us the standards by which we now judge their own country. They passed on to us that from which we derive our inspiration—their Master's vision of a world brotherhood."

¹ From a pamphlet now in the press "West Africa and the Issue of the War" by Kofi Abrefa Busia. Sheldon Press. 3d.

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